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to suit his inscrutable purposes. Only a fellow Corsican, M. Turquan, could have been mean enough to depict Bonaparte as a woman's fool. Bonaparte made mistakes, even his marriages were such, but the master of men was ever supremely master of himself.

GEORGE M. DUTCHER.

Le Partage des Biens Communaux: Documents sur la Préparation de la Loi du 10 Juin 1793. Publiés par GEORGES BOURGIN, Archiviste aux Archives Nationales. [Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire Économique de la Révolution Française, publiés par le Ministère de l'Instruction Publique.] (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale. 1908. Pp. xxiv, 757.)

THIS book is concerned with one of the most important problems before those committees of agriculture and commerce, of the three French Revolutionary assemblies, whose published *procès-verbaux* were described in the last number of the REVIEW, pp. 380-381. It appears that the Constituent Assembly never seriously investigated the problem of the communal lands; perhaps because of the overshadowing magnitude of the cognate problem of the sale of the lands which were the product of the confiscation of Church property. And yet the amount of the communal lands was considerable, if we may trust an estimate, ascribed in one of the documents to Turgot, which places the area at eight million arpents and the annual income at eighteen million livres. As the subtitle indicates, the present volume carries the matter only to the passage of the law of June 10, 1793. The editor explains that a succeeding volume will show that the terms of the law were in the event modified. This was not due to any haste in preparing the law, for the committee of the Legislative Assembly began its inquiries in November, 1791, and the law was shaped according to the second of two carefully studied projects.

The volume includes: first, the replies of local official bodies to two inquiries sent out by the committee of the Legislative Assembly in regard to the best method of utilizing or dividing the communal lands; second, the reports and projects of the committee; third, several radical decrees, adopted by the assembly under the immediate impression of the events of August 10, 1792, and which ordered the division of the lands, but did not indicate the method; fourth, protests and petitions from local bodies and individuals, called forth by this hasty legislation and the troubles it had caused in the departments; and, finally, the reports of the committee of the Convention, with the text of the law of June 10.

Although these documents contain no statistical information concerning the condition and extent of the communal lands in different parts of the country, they are drawn from memorials or reports of official bodies representing a majority of the departments and make the situation

fairly clear, as well as illustrate the currents of opinion during two years belonging to the middle period of the Revolution. It is evident that the existing system was almost universally condemned for its failure to utilize adequately what was felt to be an important portion of the national resources. Differences arose mainly over the mode of division, whether this should have regard to the amount already possessed by members of the community or whether the more democratic principle of distribution *par tête* should be adopted. The work of the committee of the Convention did not differ essentially from that of the committee of the Legislative Assembly, although the language of the later reports is full of the Jacobinical phrase-making common in 1793. The text of the law provides carefully for the recovery to the communes of all lands which the seigneurs had, with or without warrant of existing ordinances, occupied at any time within forty years previous to August 4, 1789, reversing decrees of the Constituent Assembly which sought to safeguard acquired rights. The new law did not make the division of the communal lands mandatory, but permitted the inhabitants to decide whether they should be divided, leased, or sold. Neither the committee of the Legislative Assembly nor that of the Convention proposed to divide the woodlands. Both recognized that this would seriously endanger the prosperity of the country, for selfish owners would be likely to cut off the trees at once. The Convention, therefore, subjected the woodlands to the operation of the forest laws.

H. E. BOURNE.

A Century of Empire, 1801-1900. By the Right Hon. Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Bart., F.R.S., D.C.L., LL.D. In three volumes. Volume I., 1801-1832. (London: Edward Arnold. 1909. Pp. xix, 352.)

IN the preface to this initial volume of a new work on nineteenth-century English history, the author, after noting the flood of monographs recently poured forth upon the period, writes:

No human being of ordinary circumstances can draw understanding from such a multitudinous source. He may behold, indeed, this vast Sahara of information, this boundless contiguity of research, not likely to dwindle, rather to widen with the ages: but having his own garden little or large, to cultivate, what knowledge comes to him must be laid at its very pale, and in manageable supply, else he will have none of it. Can this be done, he will be so much the wiser—will even be the better gardener for it, nor are there lacking among his fellows those willing to work for him thus. It is no dullards' work to follow a clue through the legion manuscripts and private memoirs to which latter-day diligence has given access. In these, truth, elsewhere unattainable, certainly awaits a finder; but in matters historical we Britons have worn so long the coloured spectacles of Party, that the puzzle is to transmit a pure ray without sacrifice of sparkle.